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UNCLAS HARARE 001390

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH'S VISIT TO AFRICA;
HARARE

- ¶1. Under headline "Bush must demand that Mbeki act on Zimbabwe" the independent daily "The Daily News" dedicated its July 9 editorial to calling on President George W. Bush "to use his immense influence to pressure" South African President Thabo Mbeki to stand up for democracy and good governance by acting on Zimbabwe. Excerpts:
- ¶2. ". . .The economic aid and development support that Bush is dangling before the continent pales into insignificance when compared with the damage caused to Africa's weak economies by the United States' protectionist trade policies. But we totally agree with Bush on one count, and that is that regional powerhouse South Africa must abandon its ineffective policy of so-called 'quiet diplomacy' and lead the way in pressuring President Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU PF party to abandon ruinous policies that have brought this once prosperous country to its knees. Bush must not be swayed or blackmailed by the usual cheap accusations of racism or arrogant imperialism by South African President Thabo Mbeki and others. . .who. . .are only interested in buying more time for Mugabe and his administration. The U. S. leader must take comfort in the knowledge that the majority of ordinary Zimbabweans. . .support his call that Zimbabwe return to democracy. We urge Bush to use his immense influence to pressure Mbeki to stop covering up for Mugabe. Bush must tell Mbeki what all of us have tried to tell the South African leader but in vain. That is that Mbeki should vigorously lead the Southern African Development Community and the rest of the international community in demanding that Mugabe step down to pave the way for a transitional government that will be tasked with organizing fresh and truly democratic elections in Zimbabwe. Bush has already started his African safari on a high note by forcing Charles Taylor to leave power and give Liberia a chance to start all over again. We see absolutely no reason why he should fail to emulate Henry Kissinger's diplomatic triumph in Pretoria in 1976, when he got John Vorster. . .to turn the screws on Ian Smith. . .until the white supremacist agreed to black majority rule. . . ."

SULLIVAN